



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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STEEL SHOT REQUIRED NATIONWIDE FOR UPCOMING WATERFOWL HUNTING SEASON

The Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reminds waterfowl hunters that nontoxic (steel) shot is required for all waterfowl and coot hunting during the 1991-92 hunting season. This is the final year of a 5-year conversion to nontoxic shot for waterfowl hunting nationwide.

In addition, it will be illegal to possess lead shot, either in shot shells or as loose shot for muzzle-loading, while hunting these species. The regulations govern all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and U.S. territorial waters seaward of county boundaries.

Spent shot deposited in hunting areas has been found to cause lead poisoning in waterfowl inadvertently ingesting the shot as they feed.

"The North American Waterfowl Management Plan is receiving tremendous support from hunters who want to restore waterfowl populations," says Service Director John Turner. "The elimination of lead poisoning is yet another way hunters can help in the effort to maintain stable, healthy populations of ducks and geese."

Non-toxic shot requirements have been phased in by county according to the number of waterfowl harvested. Counties with the highest harvest were the first in which the use of nontoxic shot has been required. The remaining counties included this season are those having an annual average waterfowl harvest of 5 or fewer birds per square mile during the 10-year period from 1971 to 1980.

Waterfowl hunters may contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or their state wildlife agency for additional information concerning nontoxic shot regulations.